

DANCING WITH THE MASSES--OH, YOU LITTLE MASSES

At the Masses Ball, in the
Masses Hall, Socialism
Pranced with a Futu-
rist Gait.



By ALFRED KREYMBORG.

WAR or no war, Santa Claus was a fantastically busy old gentleman on Christmas Eve. Boss Time has no sympathy for rheumatic legs. You have to go through with your little job, your span of duties, the payment of your account with that most mercenary of creditors, whether you have legs or no legs. You wouldn't call Time a skinflint, but he is certainly a usurer. Thus it was that Papa Santy, who is painfully in need of a siesta these days, was sent on his round of chimneys as of yore. And as though his ingenuity had not been tested enough in the past, the Boss forced a new duty on his weary old brain:

"What will you do for The Masses?"

"The Masses?" quoth he; "I am always doing things for the masses." "No, you have never done anything for The Masses," quoth the Boss. "You surely must mean my old friend, the public," quoth Santy. "No, not the public, but The Masses." The octogenarian soothsayer was sorely puzzled. But he appealed to the Boss.

VIEWS OF GREAT MEN ON SUFFRAGE

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From the foregoing it will be observed that the wage earners are not recent converts to the principle of equal suffrage. On the contrary, the organized workingmen have been practical and earnest advocates of woman suffrage for nearly a quarter of a century, and it is safe to predict that the organized wage earner will continue their advocacy of equal suffrage until this fundamental right and justice shall have been secured to the women of every state in the American Union.

Workingmen are advocates of equal suffrage, first, because it is right that all those who bear the burdens and enjoy the protection of government shall be entitled to equal participation in the affairs of government; second, because they know in a vital way that without the ballot wage earning women are unable to protect themselves against the wrongs and the unnecessary hardships incident to and connected with our marvellous industrial development.

It has been said, and I hope and believe it has truthfully been said, that American men are more considerate of women, that they are more chivalrous, than are the men of other countries; but I fear that this chivalry is limited to our social and family life; that it does not extend to the workshop, the store and the factory. I believe, however, that women should not be under the necessity of depending upon the chivalry of men in order that they may secure considerate treatment or social and industrial justice. They should be in possession of the power to compel just treatment in the spheres of legislation and industry. Each year, each decade, it is proved that women in ever increasing numbers are forced to enter the industrial field in order that they may earn their livelihood. Every one at all familiar with

And the Boss, quoth further, quoth: "We are careless in our pronunciation. Which is criminal in a Harvard graduate like me. I am careless with my assignments. No wonder you go wrong now and then. My tongue slipped when I said 'The Masses.' I was referring to 'Them Asses.'"

Them Asses! Santy understood at last. Said he, with childlike triumph: "During my Christmas shopping the past week or so I have come across signs, especially along my beloved thoroughfare, Greenwich Village, where folk sleep by day as well as by night, 'Come to the Futurist Ball of Them Asses.' The only thing in the world Mr. and Mrs. Wernon Kastle have not indorsed is the costume dance given by the writers and artists of 'Them Asses.'" "That's it," said the Boss; "now what are you going to do for them?" "I'll climb down the old chimney of Leslie Hall—I know the place of old—and bring them a load or two of pretty girls." And he did. That is the principal reason why The Masses Ball was such an unqualified, happy, glittering, frittering success.

Girls in green, girls in red, girls in yellow, girls in purple, Junos, Minervas, Dianas, and a Venus or two, plain little everyday American ladies, and ladies representing the warring nations, girls with such eyes, girls with such alluring grace, girls, girls, merely girls! And how they danced! Terpsichore had the time of her old life. Her face put that of any June bride to shame. She was proud of her fledglings.

Nowhere in her wide world had they ever behaved with more of joyous, innocent abandon. And their costumes! What mothers' pocketbooks had paid for them? What lovers' hearts were broken by them? What new worshippers were born at sight of them? Romance is a wily wench. You never can see her. But she lurks in evil hallways as well as open places. And she was more than active, for one of her years, on that superlative occasion. But there were other dancers as well as girls, mere girls.

Artists are not dignitaries or mummies, or folk who merely paint or draw or illustrate. Writers are not highbrows, or dime museum freaks, or folk who simply scratch off novels, or perspire verses or essays on the inefficacy of the Monroe Doctrine. Artists and writers are human beings. Artists and writers love to dance, whether they can or not. Artists and writers love to dance, even though they do not know the subtle shades between a Fijian mollygallop and an up-to-date fox trot. Most of them couldn't even tell you what they were dancing.

TEMPORARILY THE CELEBRITY HARBORS HUMAN EMOTIONS.

All any of them were conscious of was the fact that they were dancing, like common ordinary folk of this earthly planet, with what to them, if not to you, was the fairest Hebe in the whole assembly. At The Masses Ball one actually saw immortals dancing and mincing like mortals. The gods of the brush and the pen and the gods of the dens of socialism and anarchism came down for a space. Their movements on legs may have appeared to the casual eye like struggling on stilts, but it was all the more joyous to the ear when one of your neighbors, a man in the know, so to speak, whispered: "There goes Emma Goldman."

Verily! There was Emma, as large as life, and as gentle and harmless looking as any debutante, just returned from a little peaceful tour through the West, whither she had gone to start a few more puppets punch and juggling. Hovering near her and almost touching the ceiling with his benign height, standing in statuesque simplicity of pose, was Leonard Dalton Abbott. Abbott had brought with him almost the entire population of his Ferrer School, to which he plays grand-daddy—and they were scattered all about the white, green, gold room, laughing, fooling, arguing, jostling, wrestling, like a flock of school kids out on a Maypole excursion.

Did they bring costumes? They did. Futur-

ism was stretched to the point where the ism became a spasm. Color vied with color in a riot that would have inspired the mad, waggish imagination of that arch-cubist, Henri Matisse. Draperies blew about with a happy impudence that would have aroused the envy of Ruth St. Denis. Originality of dance was indulged in that would have sent Rodin back to his studio for a newly curious experiment in the everlastingly fascinating chiselling of the poetry of motion.

But who is that tall Arab, yonder? Who, but Max Eastman, editor of "The Masses." Eastman possesses other duties and pleasures besides the off-hand penning of books on the "enjoyment of poetry." As a matter of fact, to enjoy poetry, even to write such happy-go-lucky provender, one has to live poetry, and where live it more intimately than under the gayety of lights and the persuasive joy of humans to the accompaniment of the deliriously noisy, heart breaking rhythms of the tango and trot and maxixe and hesitation provided with such tireless energy and enthusiasm as that lavished by the famous octoroons of the Clef Club orchestra? They looked like a set of toy wooden images, packed on the stage of Leslie Hall, but they were seventeen heart beats more alive than the liveliest automaton.

NAMES WHICH ILLUMINATE THESE SAD AND DEGENERATE DAYS.

They were all there. What would a "Masses" ball be without "The Masses" themselves? Art Young, cartoonist extraordinaire, silent, vitriolic Art Young; Robert Carlton Brown, in a Spanish creation, bought of some Castilian pawnbroker—Brown, who can write more short stories in a day than you can in a year; Floyd Dell, the prolific chartreusian purveyor of dainty plays, and still daintier authority on things feminine; William English Walling, the most austere of Socialists, and, incidentally, the loftiest of mind and soul; John Sloan, painter of the streets that are New York, and illustrator of the humans that are not; Stuart Davis, who out-Henris Henri; Glenn Coleman, who made Chinatown famous; Kenneth Chamberlain, who can scratch off drawings twice as tall as his own tall self—and he is a miniature of the Woolworth Building—and, of course, Maurice Becker, who was in greater demand than any dancer at the ball. Max Endicoff, business manager of "The Masses"—and even "The Masses" requires a commercial department—took care of the receipts, and they must have been healthy indeed, for there were several hundred struggling humans on the floor. Louis Untermeyer, poet of thrice impassioned lyrics, who tells poets not to write war poems and then does so himself; Mary Heaton Vorse, one of the cleverest of American story penners, and the office force of "The Masses," including the bookkeeper and the office boy, were also there.

The everyday masses supplied a startling array of talent as well. Glib, genial Herb Roth elbowed Berton Braley, the millionaire poet, perhaps the most prolific soul under all the moons, suns and stars. He can make the most humble apple pie immortal with one touch of

his golden pen. Professor Parmelee, of Columbia—yes, Columbia is getting to be quite a radical institution—outvied the most irrepressible of irrepressibles: Adolf Wolff, in tireless dancing, although Wolff's contribution came more naturally under the heading of monkeyish antics. As a matter of record, Wolff sings, sighs and curses twice as well with his legs as he does with his tongue. John Rompapas, father of that revolutionary publication, "The Rabelais Press," had a few words with Frank Shay, the notorious wild man from Alberta. Rose Strunsky, who has been looking after Abe Lincoln's reputation, and her sister, Anna Strunsky Walling, aided Lucy Huffaker, one of the most aggressive feminists at large, in upholding the balance of political power against the males.

Edmond MacKenna, fresh from European peacefare and fresh with his latest sheaf of poems; Andre Tridon, who can write on any subject, whether there is one to write on or not, or whether he understands it or not; Laurence Langner, effete, polite, aristocratic, Socratic, and dispenser of dramas; Carlo Fornaro, cartoonist and Mexican revolutionist; James Montgomery Flagg, the plutocrat among illustrators; Dr. Sheldon, of the Church of the Social Revolution; Amos Pinchot, for some reason or another a hobnobber here; Brother Baylinson, who looks after the delicate hopefuls who come to the Independent School of Art for enlightenment as to what and what not to paint; Robert Allerton Parker, of "Current Opinion" fame; Charles Wood, whose calling is "The Call"; Dr. Swanson, just returned from aiding the Red Cross in its handiwork abroad; Jack Magrath, who looks after the poor of pocket; Louise Kuefner, one of the leading exponents of vers libre; Walt Kuhn, who knows more about futurism than any other over here, since he was one of the prime instigators of the international armory exhibition; Robert Henri, painter of social ladies and tutor of social ladies—and this, that and 't' other famous individual was present.

One of the dancers, a tall slender stork, carried a sign on his back: "Temporarily out of order." He could not have been referring to "The Masses," nor was he a watchword of any sort. "The Masses" is, or are, as you take them, always out of order. Do you know their challenge? It was posted on one of the walls of innocent Leslie Hall. And it did not take a pair of spectacles, however black rimmed, to make out the meaning thereof. "The Masses" has no dividends to pay, and nobody is trying to make money out of it." That is surely out of order. "A revolutionary, and not a reform magazine; a magazine with a sense of humor and no respect for the respectable; frank, arrogant, impudent, searching for the true causes; a magazine directed against rigidity and dogma wherever it is found"—how about wherever it is not found?—"printing what is too naked or true for a money making press; a magazine whose final policy is to do as it pleases and conciliate nobody, not even its readers—a free magazine." And there you are. What are you going to do about it?

From its humble editor all the way down to its lofty office boy, that is the spirit of "The Masses." From the most notable of its guests down to its most insignificant, that was the spirit in which folk enjoyed the ball. We are here for a good time. And we don't care how we take it or get it. Let us squeeze all of it into one evening if we can. Life is short. We may never see another eve like this. No one departed early. And when the Clef Club, weary with its valiant work, wanted to cease thrumming, pounding and twanging, at 5 a. m., what did the guests do but raise a fund to keep them longer. At 7 they were still dancing. But the humble scribe was eating his breakfast. There is a limit even to joy.

MILITARISM AND MORMONISM

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000, in the eight South Atlantic States there are 7,000, in the twelve North Central States there are 32,000, in the eight South Central States there are 10,000 and in the Western division of eleven states there are 206,000. These 258,000 are actual church members or communicants, representing, of course, a much greater number of followers. Then in the Mexican state of Chihuahua and the Canadian province of Alberta they are so numerous as to form the dominant factor in the population. How little really startling the proposal of a Mormon tabernacle in this city is may be judged from the fact that there are and long have been Mormon churches with regular places of meeting in both Manhattan and Brooklyn, as well as in Boston, Portland, New Haven, Burlington, Vt., St. John, N. B., Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Baltimore and Charleston, W. Va. It should be explained, by the way, that in Mormon parlance "church" means solely the organization of persons, while "tabernacle" means their public place of meeting. The "temple"—there is only one—is the secret house of the hierarchy, into most of which the public, whether Mormon or Gentile, are never admitted, but which is reserved for the ordination of priests, the making of marriages "for eternity" and the mystic rites of baptizing living persons as proxies for long dead ancestors.

With all these thousands distributed as heaven throughout the lump of the United States, and, indeed, all Christendom, the Mormons maintain a cheerful faith in their ultimate mate and not very distant domination of the whole world. That would mean both political and commercial as well as religious domination, since it is their policy to require converts to vote as a unit and to have all business enterprises monopolized in a "Zion cooperative" institution. Now it is an interesting turn of fate which causes them to think that they can see in the world's most colossal war an opportunity for the world-wide triumph of their most cherished principle of faith and practice.